

Northwest Salmon Fisheries I

Date of Declaration/Determination: May 26, 1994

Location: Pacific Northwest (Coastal Washington, Oregon, and Northern California)

Description/Cause: Despite increasingly stringent management measures, salmon stocks collapsed during the 1991-1995 period due to environmental factors that caused extremely poor survival. These factors included: (1) an extended drought in California; (2) less than normal snowpack throughout the western United States; (3) drought followed by extensive flooding in the State of Washington; and (4) poor upwelling, due to an extreme El Nino ocean warming event during 1992-1993. From 1988 to 1992, chinook abundance declined by almost 80 percent, while from 1976 to 1993, chinook landings declined by 95 percent. During 1994, many coho stocks reached record lows in terms of abundance while many chinook stocks were at very low or record low levels. Salmon fisheries in the ocean waters off Washington and northern Oregon were closed. Remaining salmon fisheries in ocean waters off central and southern Oregon and California were at reduced levels and closed to coho.

Authority: Sec 308(d) of IFA

Appropriation: \$12 million

Assistance Provided:

The Northwest Emergency Assistance Program (NEAP) was implemented, based on discussions with State officials and with affected industry, to provide financial assistance to commercial fishermen who recently participated in coastal salmon fisheries and were substantially reliant on West Coast salmon resources for their income, and to contribute to long term conservation and restoration of salmon.

. NEAP included three activities to assist fisherman and restore the fishery: a fishing permit buyback, habitat restoration jobs, and data collection jobs. The breakdown of funds (\$ in millions) for each component was as follows:

	<u>Buyback</u>	<u>Habitat</u>	<u>Data</u>	<u>State Total</u>
Washington	4.0	1.6	1.0	6.6

Oregon	-0-	2.2	0.5	2.7
California	-0-	2.2	0.5	2.7
Total	4.0	6.0	2.0	12.0

Vessel Permit Buyback Program: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife administered a buyback of State salmon permits under a grant from NMFS. The buyback used a reverse auction system (lowest offer by gear bought first). A total of 296 permits were purchased at a total of \$3.88 million. Individual amounts paid ranged from \$553-\$38,000, and averaged about \$13,000.

Habitat Restoration Program: This program was administered by Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA, via a Memorandum of Understanding with NOAA. NRCS provided funds to three state organizations who ran separate competitions for the monies. Funds were awarded to soil and water conservation districts to carry out restoration activities on private lands where there is identified critical salmon habitat. Activities included removal of culverts, constructing fences near streambeds, and planting trees and vegetation on stream banks. Contractors who carried out the work hired eligible commercial fishers at a living wage (\$10-\$15 per hour) plus benefits. Organizations involved at the state level were: Washington State Conservation Commission, Oregon Department of Agriculture and Humboldt County Resource Conservation District.

Data Collection Jobs Program: This program was administered by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) under grant from NMFS. PSMFC contracted funds to both state fish and wildlife agencies and contractors to carry out a range of fisheries data collection activities. Agencies/contractors were encouraged to hire eligible fishers to assist with such projects and to utilize fishing vessels of eligible fishers as platforms for data collection. Examples of projects included: troll and sport encounter rate and gear selectivity studies; Columbia River Terminal Area test fishing; Rogue River Terminal Area Genetic stock Identification Study; Willapa Bay and Columbia River Sea Lion Tagging; and Chetco River Salmon Spawning Survey.